Chinese / 汉语 Hanyu ~ 中文 Zhongwen

romanization: UN 1977 (*pinyin*)

Chinese is written in Han script (汉字 *Hanzi*) that uses logograms to denote words and syllables. Names are romanized according to a scheme (拼音 *pinyin*) that was adopted in China in the 1950's. The approved readings of Chinese characters can be obtained from modern authoritative dictionaries, such as *Xinhua Zidian*.

Conversions from other systems

I. In English the **Modified Wales-Giles transcription** (1892) was much used previously. This can be converted into *pinyin* as given below. (NB! This system has often been used in a simplified way, without apostrophes; in that case unambiguous conversion into *pinyin* is not possible.)

WG	UN						
Syllable		ss	= s	en	= an	ŭ	= i
beginnings:		sz	= s	ên	= en	ü	= u, ü^F
		t	= d	êng	= eng	üan	= uan
ch	= zh, j^A	t'	= t	êrh	= er	üeh	= ue, üe^F
ch'	= ch, q^A	ts	= z	i	= i, yi^B	uei	= ui
hs	= x	ts'	= c	ieh	= ie	ün	= un
j	= r	tz	= z	ien	= ian	ung	= ong
k	= g	tz'	= c	ih	= i		
k'	= k	*Syllable endings:*		iung	= iong		
p	= b	ê	= e	o	= o^C, uo^D, e^E		
p'	= p	eh	= e	u	= u, ou^F		

^{A} Before *i* (except the ending *-ih*) and *ü*.
^{B} Word-initially.
^{C} After *p, p', m, f, w, y*.
^{D} After *t, t', n, l, ch, ch', j, ts, ts', s*.
^{E} After *k, k', h* and syllable-initially.
^{F} After *n, l*.

II. In the 1910's a phonetic notation system was adopted in China that is called *Zhuyin Fuhao* (注音符號 'phonetic symbols'), sometimes *Guoyin Zimu* (国音字母 'national phonetic symbols'), colloquially **Bopomofo** after the first four symbols (ㄅㄆㄇㄈ). This is still used in Taiwan.

ㄅ	b-	ㄏ	h-	ㄙ	s-	ㄣ	-(e)n	
ㄆ	p-	ㄐ	j-	ㄚ	-a	ㄤ	-ang	
ㄇ	m-	ㄑ	q-	ㄛ	-o	ㄥ	-(e)ng	
ㄈ	f-	ㄒ	x-	ㄜ	-e	ㄦ	-er	
ㄉ	d-	ㄓ	zh-	ㄝ	-e (ê)	ㄧ	-i	
ㄊ	t-	ㄔ	ch-	ㄞ	-ai	ㄨ	-u	
ㄋ	n-	ㄕ	sh-	ㄟ	-ei	ㄩ	-ü	
ㄌ	l-	ㄖ	r-	ㄠ	-ao			
ㄍ	g-	ㄗ	z-	ㄡ	-ou			
ㄎ	k-	ㄘ	c-	ㄢ	-an			

Notes

1. Syllables *ci, chi, si, shi, zi, zhi* are written without syllable-finals.
2. Tones are marked with the same symbols as in *pinyin*, except Tone 1 (ˉ) which is not marked. Light tone is marked with a dot before the syllable.
3. Examples: ㄌㄨㄥˊ → *lóng*, ㄕㄢ・ㄉㄜ → *shānde*, ㄉㄧㄝ → *diē*, ㄋㄩˇ → *nǔ*, ㄑㄧㄠˇ → *qiǎo*, ㄧㄤ → *yang*, ㄐㄩㄝ → *jue*, ㄑㄩㄢˊㄌㄧˋ → *quánlì*, ㄧˇ・ㄗ → *yǐzi*.

III. In Russian the **Palladius transcription** is used which was finalized mainly by 1888.

Syllable beginnings:		цз	z, j[A]	оу	ou	энь	en
б	b	ч	ch	у	u, wu*	эр	er
в	w	чж	zh	я	ua	ю	iu, you*
г	g	ш	sh	уай	uai	юань	uan, yuan*
д	d	*Syllable endings:*		уан	uang	юе[F]	üe, ue[D], yue*
ж	r	а	a	уань	uan	юй	ü, u[D], yu*
к	k	ай	ai	уй	ui	юн	iong, yong*
л	l	ан	ang	ун	ong	юнь	un, yun*
м	m	ань	an	унь	un	юэ	üe, ue[D], yue*
н	n	ао	ao	уэй[E]	ui	я	ia, ya*
п	p	е	ie, ye*	ы	i[C]	ян	iang, yang*
с	s, x[A]	и	i, yi*	ын[E]	eng	янь	ian, yan*
т	t	ин	ing, ying*	ынь[E]	en	яо	iao, yao*
ф	f	инь	in, yin*	э	e		
х	h	о	uo, o[B]	эй	ei		
ц	c, q[A]	ой[E]	ui	эн	eng		

* As a separate syllable, without an initial consonant.
[A] Before е, и, ю, я.
[B] After б, в, м, п, ф and as a separate syllable.

[C] Syllable ды → *dė*.

[D] After с (*x*), ц (*q*), цз (*j*).

[E] Exceptional or traditional equivalent in some syllables, e.g. хой / хуэй → *hui*, мын → *meng*, мынь → *men*.

[F] Obsolete transcription, nowadays юэ.

Note. To indicate syllable boundaries, hard sign may be used, cf. фанань → *fanan*, фанъань → *fang'an*.

IV. In the 1950's there was an attempt to devise an **Estonian transcription** of Chinese names and the instructions were published in 1957. This was abandoned in 1960 in favour of *pinyin*. If needed, the system might be used for adapting Chinese words into Estonian.

Syllable beginnings:

b	= p	w	= v	ian	= jen
c	= tsh	x	= s	iang	= jang
ch	= tšh	y	= j	iao	= jau
d	= t	z	= ts	ie	= je
g	= k	zh	= tš	iong	= jung
j	= ts	*Full syllables:*		iu	= jo(u)
k	= kh	wu	= u	o	= uo[C]
p	= ph	you	= ju	ong	= ung
q	= tsh	*Syllable endings:*		ou	= ou
r	= ž	ao	= au	u	= u, ü[D]
sh	= š	e	= õ, e[A]	ui	= uei
t	= th	i	= i, õ[B]	un	= uen?
		ia	= ja		

[A] In combinations *ei* and *ie*.

[B] After *c, ch, r, s, sh, z, zh*.

[C] After *b, f, m, p*.

[D] After *j, q, x, y*.

Sources

1. Klaus Kaden, *Die wichtigsten Transkriptionssysteme für die chinesische Sprache. Eine Einführung zum Selbststudium.* VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, Leipzig 1975.
2. *Juhiseid hiina nimede kirjutamiseks eesti keeles.* – ENSV TA Toimetised, Üt. seeria 3-4/1957, lk 350-354.